

HIS SHOT WAS DEAD^d/CENTRE BUT IT DID NOT COUNT!

Sceptical audiences at the musical "Annie, Get Your Gun" watched the heroine Annie Oakley, show great skill with pistol and rifle in her role in circuses and fair-grounds.

But the real Annie Oakley, upon the life of whom the musical was based, was a real markswomen, particularly with the shotgun, for at Pinehurst, North Carolina in 1922, she attained the ambition of every clay-pigeon shot by bringing down 100 birds straight.

An Australian, who had equalled Annie's feat before he competed in the Sydney anniversary shoot, in 1938, was Horrie James, who shot under the name of "Duxbac", and an extraordinary happening there prevented him from repeating it.

At the Harbor City, where the best shots in the land competed, James shot 95 straight before shooting the centre out of his 96th bird without breaking it and, because the rules require that a discernible piece must be broken from the target if it is not shattered, James's perfect shot was not allowed, dust only being blown from the bird. However, his 95 straight was a score sufficient for him to win the championship.

James later explained that the cartridge was a faulty one, the lead shot remaining in a compact mass instead of spreading. It was a thousand to one chance for the champion to miss out on a record like that.